

TO HELL WITH **status aparte!**

The Aruban People Must Let All Opportunists Know
That They Won't Dance To Their Music No More.

In our K.A. of August 1976 (8-5) we published "Caribbean Lesson" and in K.A. of November 1976 (8-6) we published "Nashon o Status Aparte". The last article ended like this: ". . . Now that independence is coming closer, Separatism is becoming a big problem". In the following article we would like to say something more about "Separaciòn" and "Status Aparte".

Did you know that the 'Referendum' in Aruba is on the 25th of March 1977, and that the Arubans can either vote for Independence or for Federation in a future "Federal Republic of The ex-Dutch Antilles"?

Aruba first belonged to the Arowak Indians and was discovered by the Spanish around 1499, and then in the early part of the 1600's the Dutch West-Indian Company passed along and took the island.

When they went bankrupt the Dutch government took the Colony Curaçao, of which Aruba was a part, and in 1954 the Statuut of the Kingdom of the Netherlands made Aruba an island-territory of the Antilles, and the latter an 'equal' partner in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (in which Surinam was also an 'equal' partner until 25/11/1975).

Curaçao has always been the main and central island of the six Dutch islands (A-B-C, S-S-S) in the Caribbean Sea.

Because of this the people of various islands felt themselves set back or neglected.

Except on Curaçao and St. Eustatius (both slave depots during the African slave trade and slavery around 1850) there was not much trade or economic

activity in the Colony of Curaçao until the oil-refineries came to Curaçao in 1915 and Aruba in 1924.

By fits and starts Aruba became just 'rich' if we can call it so, as Curaçao.

And no more than seven years after the establishment of the oil-refinery on Aruba, protest were being heard on Aruba for separaciòn, loose from Curaçao and directly under Holland.

The first one to talk of such matters was doctor Dussenbroek in 1931 and the first official political expression for Separaciòn was made in an address to the Queen -via the "Raad van Politie"- on the 9th of September 1947. And this was done by some prominent inhabitants of Aruba, all were Netherlands.

Between 1931 and 1947 various Emans of Aruba had become defenders of the right of Aruba to secede from the Colony of Cura-

çao. Because of the oil-refinery (Lago, Esso and now Exxon) Aruba had become just as economically strong as Curaçao and thought that she should have just as much say as Curaçao in all matters and found that she didn't need Curaçao any more.

Of course this is not what everybody on the island thought.

Neither do all present Arubans ! (with this we mean the people on the island of Aruba from 'yesterday' back to the year 1 B.C., and B.C. doesn't stand for Betico Croes. The first Kroes, Nicolaas, came from Zeeland, Holland, and was not an original Aruban).

Formerly it was the A.V.P. that fought for separation and went to a lot of trouble to get their views respected and accepted by the Dutch colonizers in the Netherlands.

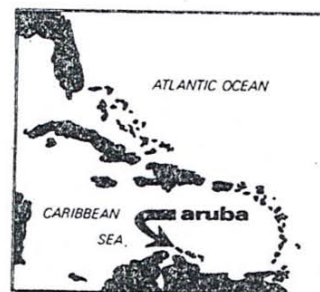
Many Curaçao politicians in the 1930's and 40's could understand the A.V.P.'s complaints and aspirations. Mr. H. Eman of the A.V.P. and Yrausquin of the P.P.A. both wanted equality for Aruba as compared to Curaçao.

Mr. da Costa Gomez of the N.V.P. agreed to this although Curaçao was twice as large as, and had twice as many people as, and perhaps paid twice as much tax as Aruba.

The movement for Autonomy, on Curaçao especially, which had started getting stronger after the Second World War, was the main political issue in the 1940's and early 50's. The Aruban struggle for Separación was a "set back" in

these years for the struggling Colony of Curaçao and its dependencies: Aruba, Bonaire and the Windward Islands (Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten); this was because the Separación propagators wanted to be loose from Curaçao but they wanted yet stronger and direct ties with The Netherlands.

Many colonies in those days wanted freedom from their colonizers, but the A.V.P.-people wanted to taste the oppression of their colonizers more directly and no longer via Curaçao.



The Curaçao-parties wanted as little possible ties with the Netherlands and the P.P.A. on Aruba wanted that too. But Eman and other A.V.P.-spokesmen wanted equality with Curaçao but closer ties with (under) the Netherlands. Eman and his 'amigos' would prefer Dutch police-men to Curaçaoenians and he would like to get some more Dutch officials on the island to help him in the administration of the island. Even the Dutch government in those days had problems accepting these proposals and treated Aruba's wish disrespectfully.

The Queen had proclaimed, on the 6th of December 1942, that some changes would be made in the colonial relations; Indonesia was fighting for its independence and almost the whole of

the colonial world was fighting for their freedom. But Aruba's A.V.P. wanted closer ties, and direct ties: no longer via-via! The Dutch finally told the Aruban separatists, those colonial-ties-seekers, in 1954 that they couldn't and wouldn't in so short a space of time once again change anything in the Constitution just to allow Aruba to be tied to them separately, outside of the Netherlands Antilles.

For changes would have to be made in their Constitution if the Kingdom was going to consist of 4 equal partners (the Netherlands, Surinam and the Neth. Antilles and Aruba) instead of 3 equal partners (the Neth., Sur., and the Neth. Ant.) The separatists were told that the Island Settlement (or Regulation) -ERNA- and the Land Settlement -Staatsregeling- and the Statuut would allow enough space for Aruba's wishes to be fulfilled to a large extent.



Between 1948 and 1950/51 our Aruba did have as much say in the "Staten". Aruba had 8 and Curaçao had 8 seats, Bonaire had 2 and Saba had 1, Statia had 1 and St. Maarten had 1. (Some parties on Curaçao now wanted Aruba to pay as much tax as Curaçao now too). This was an agreement made between the political parties of both the main islands; it was hoped that this would encourage all the po-

litical parties of Aruba to fight harder now in order for all of the islands of the Antilles to get Autonomy from Holland. The Curaçao people never wanted to oppress or exploit Aruba or any other island; what was wanted in Curaçao was: Freedom and Autonomy or even Independence, especially after the 2nd World War's experience of relative self-reliance of the islands and because of the worldwide anti-colonial sentiments and struggles. But the Aruban separatists wouldn't see this!! With their shallow ideas of racial and sentimental exclusiveness, and their ignorance of who were exploiting and oppressing them, they kept on bawling for Separaciòn, Separaciòn!! But never would they let an anti-colonial word even pass their sweet lips.

Of course there are differences between the islands and their populations. Just to name a few: the size of the islands, the population figures, the races, culture, the spelling of Papiamentu, the speaking of English or Papiamentu etc. etc. The main problem is that we are still colonized and are still being exploited. We shall solve any problem that we have because of those differences in due time and together. But as long as there is colonialism, no matter how little, on our islands it is almost (!!) impossible to even get together much less solve our problems. We must fight colonialism in all its manifestations and forms!!

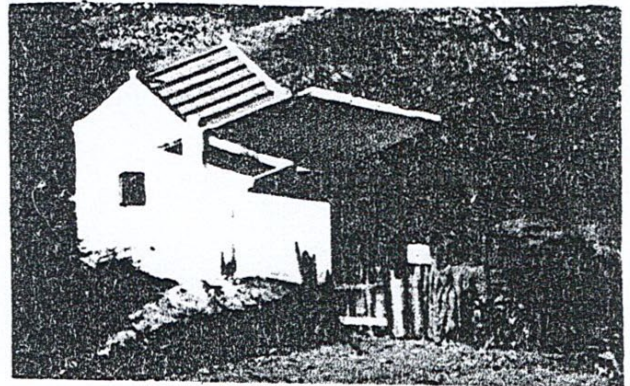
We just said that Aruba once had as many seats as Curaçao in the "Staten" (= the Senate in

Willemstad, Curaçao) and that this was an agreement reached by the Antilleans in their political parties in their struggle against Dutch 100%-colonialism. But before Autonomy (self-government in internal affairs) was granted, the Dutch decided that there must be a Curaçao majority in the "Staten", and forced the 12-Curaçao and 8-Aruba seats on the Antilles. Most probably a reason for this is the fact that more Dutch capital is invested on Curaçao; we don't think that they thought much of the difference in population-size. And it remained like this after the 15-12-1954, Autonomy Day, and we were back where we started, with Aruba wanting equality in the "Staten" and yet closer ties with The mother-country in Europe, the Netherlands.

They say that Curaçao is suppressing, oppressing and exploiting the people of Aruba!!!! ...but there are no facts or figures to prove this. But as far as the Netherlands is concerned there are many facts and figures to be found to prove that it is the Dutch government, capital and bourgeoisie, who are suppressing, oppressing and exploiting the Aruban people, or allowing the Aruban people to be exploited by other foreign capitalists.

In 1947 the separatist movement in Aruba was at its peak, and there were also demonstrations or calls for referendums or plebiscites or public opinion polls. This was after the economic development, because of the oil-refinery, and before the autonomy.

We still have our internal problems (and also external ones with the territorial-waters etc. with Venezuela). The Statuut nor any of the other Regulations give us freedom or equality. The Island Regulation, it is just a cut-to-fit Thorbecke municipal-regulation for the six islands in the Caribbean Sea, nor the Land Regulation allow for meaningful changes in order to solve our problems. What did we expect from colonialists!!! They never leave us to ourselves, they never accept defeat, they try to stay or try to come back in another form. The structures they force on us are bad, they usually cause problems, and foment misunderstandings, among us.



Now in the 1970's (1977 is 30 years after) there are again demonstrations and calls for and even the fixing of a date for a referendum (25 March '77). The Dutch left us with our internal problems in 1954; they knew that we wouldn't be able to solve our internal problems without any external authority. The Dutch take care and are responsible for our external affairs, and they can also put in the army to protect the property of the propertied and to keep peace and order, and to defend the existing social and

economic relations in the Antilles (think especially of the 30th of May 1969 in Curaçao!). And in Holland there is also the minister of Antillean Affairs with a lot of power over the Antillean politicians, who can only borrow money or buy cheap, or seek advice and aid from other countries with his permission.

The colonialists make super-human efforts to create divisions and rivalries between us (the island populations). And they do all this so that they can exploit and continue exploiting us.

Now we all know that there are rival groups on Curaçao and Aruba. These -bourgeois- groups have capital, foreign capital, to defend!



The A.V.P. became weaker and Mr. G. Betico Croes came forth with the M.E.P. in February 1971. At first he was for federation, some say. Others say that it is true, but... he wanted it with close ties to the Netherlands. Not many politicians wanted to agree to this. Then he wanted Status Aparte which meant: Loose from Curaçao and the other islands but directly under the Netherlands. The Dutch government said: NO! (so many Dutch reports on this separation and direct-under-Holland thing has been made,

that the Dutch seem to know their answer in advance, no matter what arguments the Arubans come with).

Betico couldn't get Status Aparte and now he wants Independence, and he calls it the holy cause of the people, just like he perhaps called the other things that he once wanted.

Part of the M.E.P. and Betico said a lot, worked hard, talked a lot and travelled a lot too. Most people seem to disagree with their pro-colonial struggle. They went to the Hague, London, New York, Central + South America and Geneva. They said many things, they even tried to call themselves a socialist party -do they have a programme so we can see if this is so?- but they didn't achieve much, it seems!!

One thing we can be sure of: Whatever Betico Croes is, he is not an anti-colonialist!

Yes, we know he once said a few words about colonialism, but what he said seems to be a repetition of what the Dutch K.V.P.-er said in Surinam on the 23 of May 1970. This K.V.P.-er, Westerterp said: "...to impose sovereignty, that would be colonialism in optima forma, in our opinion".

And Betico said: "Not the country that has colonies, is practicing colonialism of the worst sort, but the country that wants to get rid of its colonies by imposing a political state structure that is not in keeping with the will of the people". (Did he substitute 'sovereignty' by 'political structure', doesn't he know that they do not mean the something?

We underline the only part that makes some sense to us).

And in January 1977 while he was in the Netherlands he said:

"The Dutch people must understand well that it has never been the Arubans who called Holland a bad colonialist power. In fact we would even prefer most to keep a kind of Common Wealth relation with Holland.....I hope that the Dutch people will then still be able to convince their political leaders of the righteousness of our wish".

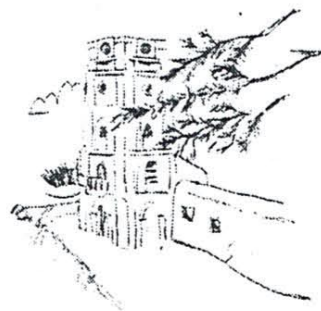
You see, even up to 1977 he is still longing for ties with the colonial power, even when such a power doesn't want to be openly colonialist anymore. (Around 1929 the Antilles were already economically self-sufficient, but because of colonialism, various types and forms, we now have to borrow money (aid) in order to pay our debts to the Netherlands).

We believe that all nations (peoples and islands) have the right to self-determination, that is, the right to secede politically from any other nation that oppresses it. Aruba also has such a right!

The Dutch government nor Mr. J. Evertsz have the right to intimidate Aruba or any section of Aruba with their Dutch expeditionary military force in the Antilles or with their financial "aid" big stick. Nor psychologically with their demographical fatalism (population too small) or geographical fatalism (island too small for self government).

Aruba has the right to secede!! To pull back out of any oppressive political constellation!!

But why does the M.E.P. only want to be loose from Curaçao and not from the Netherlands???? Curaçao is not the colonizer, the oppressor! It is Holland, the Netherlands, the Dutch government, capital and bourgeoisie!!!!



Betico and some other Arubans must open their eyes and see that it is the Dutch government and a part of the Dutch people who are to blame. That part of the Dutch people who invests in the Antilles in order to exploit us and get rich fast and easy. That part that goes to the Antilles to lead privileged lives with maids to do all their work for a few cents. The people who ask if we are ready for self-government and independence, those who ask if we think we can do it by ourselves. Those who do not protest at all or enough against their government's, the Dutch government's, colonialism.

The Dutch left us with a political structure that didn't allow us the space to create a nation of our island-people. They fixed it so that Curaçao would remain the centre of everything.

(The English did the same old

thing in the ex-English Caribbean).

We have our stupid island mentality and chauvinisms to deal with on Curaçao and Aruba and Sint Maarten (Bonaire, Statia and Saba cannot afford such foolishness). We all know that some Arubans called Curaçao 'the island of the monkeys', and that Evertsz of the NVP-U said that the Arubans are not too smart, and that his party says 'Kòrsow promé' and that they want 'one man one vote'. The AVP in it Lucha Rubiano would say 'Aruba Ariba'. Evertsz and his Integral Working Group has plans for the Antilles in the service of capitalists, as stepping stones or a gate-way to South America, or a Caribbean Hong Kong, and Betico has other plans!!! His plans or not yet very clear.



Divi-Divi Tree

We must abolish the old structure and create a new one, be it Federal or otherwise. Our present Central Government is nothing like a Federal Government, as some people claim. We do not want any oppression or exploitation or inequality, neither any privileges or exclusiveness-feelings. We do not want one island above or under the other! No, we want all the islands beside each other, and the people beside each other working for a

better future for us all and fighting against all forms of colonialism and exploitation! The majority of the people on all the islands, the working-class, the toiling people, have the same interests, and their interests are not being defended by any of the bourgeois political parties on our islands. They must not listen to any political party with opportunists-to-spare in it!! Instead of analysing the political situation and formulating a programme of action such a party prefers to keep a public opinion poll, a referendum, to try and see what the people are thinking or want at that moment. But what is going to be done with the results of the referendum? And the present Antillean Law does not recognize the outcome of any referendum either!

What can we do???????????

One of the best things for us to start doing in the Antilles is to disregard all advice of people who can be suspected of colonialist sentiments of imperialist intentions, be they professor or not! We must start getting rid of our colonial structures and thinking and habits; we must start doing everything in the interest of the working and toiling people of the Antilles, now!!!

Betico Croes and the M.E.P. must be made to understand that we want INDEPENDENCE from Holland, The Netherlands, and that we also want FEDERATION with the other islands of the Antilles and of the Caribbean.

We do not think that the message will be clear enough if the Aruban people stay home and do not go to vote, or vote blanco, or for federation only.

The message to the opportunist will be clearest, Arubans, when you go to vote and vote for Independence & Federation. When you go to vote, VOTE

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 Pa INDEPENDENSHA, Pa FEDERASHON
 riba 25 di mart 1977.

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